DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 090 241 SP 007 987

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TITLE The Versatility of Models as a Tool.
PUB DATE Apr 74
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, Illinois, April 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Instruction; *Teaching Models; *Teaching Procedures; *Teaching Techniques

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the versatility of teaching models from several vantage points. First, teaching models are applicable to a variety of educators with varying curriculum concerns. Experience has shown that all educators can use some aspect of teaching models in their work with learners. Second, teaching models are relatively content free so that they may be used in a variety of subject areas. For example, Carl Rogers' Non-Directive Teaching model might be used to help youngsters determine where they feel comfortable in beginning their work in mathematics. Third, teaching models are useful in promoting a variety of environments. Experienced teachers concerned with the kinds of social environments that are possible to radiate through the use of various teaching models can nurture interpersonal and group skills or focus on individual goals, use tight-structured models or open-structured models. Fourth, teaching models are helpful instructional interventions for developing flexibility in teacher education. Various teaching models can be grouped into four "families" that overlap and have foci different enough to give broader views, which tend to extend the possible ways of thinking about teaching. The author concludes that all of us learn in a variety of manners and that instruction in teaching models has the potential for teaching more learners more effectively through a structure that analyzes and describes many ways of teaching. (PD)

ED 090241

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THE VERSATILITY OF MODELS AS A TOOL

by

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American Educational Research Association

Annual Meeting

April 15-19, 1974

Chicago, Illinois

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The Versatility of Models as a Tool

The purpose of this paper is to report on the versatility of models of teaching from several vantage points. It is my intent to indicate, through a series of examples from my own teaching experiences, that models of teaching:

1. are applicable to a wide variety of educators with varying curriculum concerns
2. are relatively content free and therefore may be used in a variety of subject areas
3. are useful in promoting a variety of environments
4. are helpful instructional interventions or strategies for developing flexibility in teacher education

My interest in the use of "models" began at Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1966-67, under the leadership of Bruce Joyce in the Preservice Program and continues until the present in my work in the School of Education, New York University, where among other things, I teach a graduate course identified as E25.2391, "Alternative Strategies of Teaching in Elementary Education." In the course of my work at N.Y.U., I have had direct contact with some four to five hundred teachers and administrators with varying amounts of classroom experience.

The class on Alternative Strategies has been taught in Puerto Rico where New York University has a residence center. Students in this center are teachers and curriculum specialists who are particularly interested in innovation and curriculum

improvement. The class has also been an off-campus offering in a suburb of New York City where the inservice teachers are interested in enriching their teaching repertoires. Alternative Strategies has been a regular semester offering on our Washington Square campus in New York City, where teachers work in a wide range of situations,from hard-core inner city schools to selective private schools, and come with a wide variety of objectives. An abbreviated version of the Alternative Strategies class has been used with Black and Puerto Rican students in our Teacher Corp Program, where the program has been centered on competency based certification. Additionally, it has been used with undergraduate and graduate education majors who are in differing stages of student teaching.

This listing of offerings is by no means exclusive to New York University,as certainly many other institutions directly teach models,and considerable research on models is in progress. The point I wish to emphasize however, is that models of teaching, from my experiences, indicate that all educators can use some aspect of models of teaching with "learners" in their work. The Preservice Program at Teachers College, Columbia University is totally centered around models, whereas the teacher education programs at New York University use selected models in a variety of methods and curriculum classes.

A major attribute of models of teaching is that they can be "content free," that is, that they need not be used only in one specific subject matter area such as reading, writing, or arithmetic. Although many of the original theories of models of teaching grew out of a way of thinking about a specific content area, for instance, Suchman's model on scientific inquiry, a model need not, nor should not, be used exclusively in any particular content area. To illustrate this point of the possibilities of content "freeness" one speech teacher in Puerto Rico used the Suchman Inquiry Training model to help learners with a puzzling line in a poem where the poet referred to Puerto Rico as an emerald jewel. The teacher used this situation to help children develop a line of inquiry that helped them examine the poet's choice of words through verification of the various qualities of an emerald and jewel, as well as experimenting with other words to see if they contained the same meanings and feelings.

One can readily conjure up the possibilities of other models of teaching that originate in one field or discipline and would be suggestive to many subject areas. For example, the use of the Non-Directive Teaching model which grew out of the therapeutic stance of Carl Rogers might be used with youngsters to help them determine where they feel comfortable in beginning their work in mathematics (i.e., "How do you feel about multiplication? What multiplication facts are you quite

certain of? Where will you begin?"). Another example is the Awareness Training model to heighten inclusion of things seen and unseen to teach spelling in such words as "elephant," or "lazy," where configuration and awareness of form is more obvious.

Moving to another area of versatility of models as a tool, we can examine the role of the teacher in terms of control. Many student teachers and beginning teachers are concerned about discipline and how to cope with children that appear to need a high degree of structure and/or teacher control. The teacher who has a repertoire of models at his/her fingertips could move to those models where structure is inherent in the syntax such as in the Oliver and Shaver Jurisprudential Model. This is a model in which students are encouraged to see values on a dimensional scale. According to the philosophical position of this model, values should be judged on a degree of desirableness rather than on an either/or basis, and work toward a general qualified position. The teacher might also use the Skinnerian model of Operant Conditioning where there are small, controlled steps and immediate positive reinforcements for learners. These two models have been most helpful for the novice teacher.

The more experienced and sophisticated teacher, once behavioral control is not central, may be more concerned with the kinds of social environments that it is possible to radiate

through the use of various models. Certain models tend to nurture interpersonal and group skills while others focus on the individual and his/her own goals and pacing. In the same manner, the role of the teacher will vary with models. Thus, in some models the teacher is central as a question-asker or as a reflector of feelings, or as a dispensor of sanctions. Models, then, have the capacity to create various environments for teaching. Some models have a tight structure and tend to lead the teacher and student in one direction, whereas another model might have a more open structure and focus in still another direction. Thus, models of teaching, because of the strong and varied bases from which they operate, make a structure for almost any kind of educational environment a teacher wishes to construct.

My last illustration on versatility of models, a relatively lengthy one, is drawn from my class on Alternative Strategies of Teaching.

In order to determine the various perceptions teachers and administrators have of teaching, I ask the students in the first session to respond to the stem, "Good teaching is...." The responses to this stem trigger off a wide variety of perceptions about teaching. A compilation of these responses gives leads to the concerns of this group of students as well as suggesting the openess of the students to which models might best be introduced first and what general direction we will need

to take. As their responses to "Good teaching is...." are placed in various categories, it is apparent that some groups tend to be on the current educational bandwagon of the "open classroom" ("Good teaching is when each child is free to select his own activity"), or large groups of teachers are "into awareness training" ("Good teaching is being sensitive to how others feel and centering into where the learners are"). Some students are more cognitively oriented ("Good teaching helps all children grow in their ability to think and evaluate") while others may stress the affective domains ("Good teaching involves the children in making strong commitments"). With this additional data the instructor has some information about students' current concerns in teaching and can select models that will tend to give the students a broader perspective of teaching. This helps them enlarge their teaching repertoire to become teachers who are more flexible and to recognize and cope with a larger variety of situations. One of the more effective ways of accomplishing this goal is to ensure that teachers are introduced to a contrasting variety of models. If they are "sold" on creativity, they need to know about the power of operant conditioning; if they are skilled in giving Advanced Organizers, perhaps knowledge and skill in non-directive teaching will give them another functional tool.

I have found the most satisfactory method of introducing the concept of models and their various foci is to begin a

discussion on methods of teaching reading since all students have varying degrees of commitment to some type of method of teaching reading, whether it is a language experience approach or a strictly phonetic system. Once these various methods of teaching reading are "laid out" in their abbreviated syntax form, it is a relatively simple task to point out the relationships between the focus of any given reading plan and one of the models of teaching. For instance, the language experience approach has a focus on the direct experiences the child has and the emphasis is on giving the child personal experiences which are then verbalized before being put in a written form. The reading teacher then works back and forth from the written recorded experiences a child or group of children have had to the remembered real experience. This language experience approach to teaching reading with its focus on the vital experiences learners have is comparable to non-directive teaching, where once again the focus is on the vital experiences learners have and what they "see" in a situation. For quite another purpose in the teaching of reading, some teachers place their focus on the phonetic approach where the emphasis is on the identification and blending of sounds which might be more easily accomplished by a greater amount of drill in which operant conditioning would be a more appropriate choice of model of teaching. It is in this manner of taking familiar subject matter, the teaching of reading, and helping students

see there are many ways of teaching reading, each having a different focus, as there are many models of teaching, each having a different focus, for a different purpose.

The major "assignment" in the Alternative Strategies class is to demonstrate competencies in three different models drawn from three different "families" of models. Those of you who are familiar with the text, Models of Teaching by Joyce and Weil, will recognize their grouping or categorization of models by families as (1) The Social Interaction Sources, where the orientation is on people to their larger society, and is represented by such theorists as Thelen, Dewey, Massialas, and Cox; (2) The Information-Processing Sources, where,as the title implies, the focus is on information processing and theories of ways to improve this capacity, as exemplified by Bruner, Taba, Piaget and others; (3) The Personal Sources, where the goal is the individual person and the way he organizes his reality, as typified by the work of Glasser, Rogers, and Gordon; and, (4) Behavior Modification as a Source, where operant conditioning is central, such as in the work of Skinner. These families do overlap, however, the focus is different enough in each of the four families to give broader views that tend to extend the possible ways of thinking about teaching.

The assignment of three different models from three different "families" guarantees exposure that may lead students to become more versatile in their teaching as they explore,

analyze and develop skill in the use of these contrasting models.

The first demonstration of competency on a model of teaching is done for the class by groups of three to five students who have selected a specific model. Typically, this group will have planning sessions where they assign themselves background reading in the text and several basic writings of the major theorists, in order to become more knowledgeable about their goals.

As a part of their preparation for peer teaching they use Joyce and Weil's categories for analyzing and describing models, which are:

1. orientation of focus of the model
2. phasing of the model
3. principles of reaction by the teacher
4. social system characteristic of the model
5. support systems that are needed
6. classroom implementation
7. general applicability of the model

These seven categories for analyzing and describing the models gives a solid structure for each student to focus on the different aspects of the model.

As a result of the peer teaching all students are then familiar with a variety of models and have had opportunities to compare and contrast their first models within the framework of the seven categories.

Each individual student then is required to submit two different audio tape recordings of samples of their teaching with children where they use two other models. The students accompany these recorded samples of teaching with papers utilizing the seven categories for analyzing and describing models. Thus, I am able to observe how thoroughly they have internalized and incorporated this mode of thinking.

All of us learn in a variety of manners. We have differing concerns and differing ways of knowing. Instruction in models of teaching has the potential for reaching more learners more effectively through a structure that analyzes and describes those many ways of teaching.